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INSIDE REPORT: *Whither* Subandrio

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak
JAKARTA, Indonesia.

Dr. Subandrio is not only Indonesia's articulate, fast-rising Foreign Minister.

He also controls the BPI (Indonesia's intelligence agency), the Antara News Agency (virtually the sole source of news in this vast nation of 104 millions) and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, until December under the jurisdiction of Adam Malik. Malik still runs insular trade but not the far more important foreign trade division.

Dr. Subandrio wears still other hats. He controls both the propaganda and economic organizations created to support President Sukarno's "crush Malaysia" policy against the British-created, British-backed state of Malaysia.

Inasmuch as the Malaysia issue is to President Sukarno today what the New Deal was to FDR in the '30s—that is, the be-all and end-all of government—this puts Dr. Subandrio athwart every important policy decision of the government. All in all, Dr. Subandrio is a man to reckon with.

Consider the power inherent in the control of foreign trade. Subandrio can give or withhold final approval of highly lucrative contracts with foreign concerns bidding for the government's business.

As a result of the rapid rise of Dr. Subandrio, predictions are being heard here that he may be President Sukarno's heir apparent. This prospect is arousing intense concern among moderate political elements whose voice is quiet today but whose influence could be vital after the idolized President (whose health today seems good enough) departs the scene.

The reason for the concern is Dr. Subandrio's growing intimacy with the PKI (the Communist party of Indonesia). Although President Sukarno himself is on intimate terms with the PKI, he is the boss, drawing his support from every segment of the population, not just the PKI.

But Dr. Subandrio lacks a political base. To succeed Sukarno, he would need the active support of the PKI. And once in power, his ability to stay there would depend on the continued support of the PKI. The Communist party would hold all of Dr. Subandrio's eggs in its own basket. Dr. Subandrio would be in the PKI's political debt to an extent that alarms Indonesia's anti-Communists, particularly the army, and that forebodes ill for America's declining influence in this strategic area.

There is evidence that Dr. Subandrio is quite aware of this concern by the army and has attempted to deal with it. Last August the Foreign Minister advised the President that Gen. Nasution, the senior and most prestigious officer of the army, was in league with the Americans and ought to be retired. Sukarno was unimpressed.

In January he again launched a quiet campaign to ease Gen. Nasution out of the Defense Ministry, again without results.

Dr. Subandrio took a major part in undermining the spontaneous "Body for the Promotion of Sukarnoism" late last year, in which anti-Communist political parties, newspapers, and other organizations joined in an effort to undercut the growing influence of the PKI and to replace it with their own.

The PKI, assisted by Dr. Subandrio, persuaded the President that this move was actually the brainchild of the American CIA. It offered as evidence "The Invisible Government," a best-selling American book on the Central Intelligence Agency, which deals with alleged CIA activity in Indonesia in the late 1950s.

The "Body for the Promotion of Sukarnoism" was not only destroyed by Dr. Subandrio and the PKI, but its destruction also served as a pretext for new repression of non-Communist influences throughout the country, leaving Dr. Subandrio and the PKI on an even higher crest of influence.

The most conspicuous non-Communist institution to escape presidential wrath in the wake of the weird BPS affair was the army. As Dr. Subandrio and the PKI forge what is assumed to be their common link for the climactic struggle when the Sukarno era ends, the only organized force to oppose them is the army.

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